

is easy to see how more money might help, but in this era of budget constraints, no large infusion of cash is going to come from Washington. In some respects, that's appropriate. Different communities have different needs, and my sense is that locally created solutions forged by partnerships among businesses, schools, churches, and government are probably going to be most successful. Nonetheless, we do have a responsibility as a nation to see that children are given the opportunity to prosper. Finding a way to pay child care workers a living wage and assure that they are professionally trained and supervised is crucial. Some suggest that greater government regulation of child care providers would improve care, but others worry that this would drive up costs and worsen the affordability problem.

President Clinton has proposed spending \$300 million to train 50,000 day care providers who promise to stay in the field at least one year. He also pledged to devote more AmeriCorps volunteers to after-school programs. Others have proposed raising the Department Care Tax Credit, which has not been increased since 1981, and making the credit refundable for low-income families. Still others believe that more child care is a bad approach and favor providing incentives for parents to stay at home with children or utilize flexible work arrangements.

We need to place a higher priority on meeting the educational and emotional needs of young children. There are many difficult questions surrounding the availability, affordability, and quality of child care in this country, and plenty of room for argument on how best to achieve satisfactory arrangements. But all of us have a stake in giving every child a decent start. My strong sense is that not nearly enough child care is of the quality that all children deserve. I have the feeling that finding a way to improve child care is one of the next big challenges ahead.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT FRANCIS RITTER, JR.

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 28, 1998

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Robert Francis Ritter, Jr. who has served as the President of the Reseda Chamber of Commerce for the last two years.

One only has to look at the choices Rob has made throughout his life and his career to realize his commitment to family. He has worked in his family printing business for 16 years, alongside his mother, father, sisters and brothers-in-law. Working together as a team, the Ritter family has not only developed a successful business, they have maintained strong bonds out of the office as well. The Ritter family also adeptly demonstrated their strength and unity at the softball city semifinals last season.

As President of the Reseda Chamber of Commerce, one of Rob's priorities has been to create an environment in which the standard for families has been raised. He developed and maintained the Facade Improvement Program and the Business Improvement District, which were started by Councilmember Laura Chick. In addition, Reseda received \$310,000 from the Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative. Rob worked to ensure that all of these programs have a positive and lasting effect on our community.

William James once said, "The greatest use of life is to spend it for something that outlasts it." Though Rob Ritter's term as president is over, the work he has done for Reseda will be appreciated for many years to come. Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, please join me in honoring Robert Ritter, for his commitment to our community.

THE HAWAII FEDERAL MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PERCENTAGE ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 1998

HON. NEIL ABERCROMBIE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 28, 1998

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to adjust the Federal medical assistance percentage [FMAP] rate for Hawaii to more fairly reflect the state's ability to bear its share of Medicaid payments. I am pleased that my colleague, Representative PATSY MINK, has joined me as a sponsor of this measure. I am also happy to join our Senate counterparts, Senator DANIEL AKAKA and Senator DANIEL INOUE, in putting forth this legislation. In November 1997, a similar bill, S. 1376 was introduced by Senator AKAKA.

The Federal share of Medicaid payments for each state varies according to the state's ability to pay. Because per capita income is the determining factor for ability to pay, wealthier state bear a larger share of the cost of the program through lower FMAP rates. In Hawaii, per capita income is relatively high. Thus, the State's FMAP rate is 50 percent, the lowest level. Under this bill, Hawaii's FMAP rate would be increased from 50 percent to 59.8 percent.

The rationale for the FMAP rate change is quite simple. Hawaii's high cost of living skews the per capita income determining factor. Based on 1995 United States Census data, the cost of living in Honolulu is 83 percent higher than the average of the metropolitan areas. More recent studies have shown that for the state as a whole, the cost of living is more than one-third higher than the rest of the United States. In fact, Hawaii's Cost of Living Index ranks it as the highest in the country. Some government programs take the high cost of living in Hawaii into account and funding is adjusted accordingly. These programs include Medicare prospective payment rates, food stamp allocations, school lunch programs, housing insurance limits, Federal employee salaries, and military living expenses. These examples show a Federal recognition that the higher cost of living in noncontiguous states should be taken into account in fashioning government program policies. It is time for similar recognition of this factor in gaging Hawaii's ability to support its health care programs.

An excellent analysis of this issue is included in the twenty-first edition of "The Federal Budget and the States," a joint study conducted by the Taubman Center and Local Government at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and the office of Senator DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN. According to the study, if per capita income is measured in real terms, the State of Hawaii ranks 47th at \$19,755 compared to the national av-

erage of \$24,231. Thus, Hawaii's 50 percent FMAP rate is understated because cost of living factors are not considered. Per capita income is a poor measure of Hawaii's relative ability to bear the cost of Medicaid services.

In addition to the high cost of living, the Harvard-Moynihan study finds that Hawaii also has one of the highest poverty rates in the nation. The state's 16.9 percent poverty rate is ranked eighth in the country, compared to the national average of 14.7 percent. These higher cost levels are reflected in state government expenditures and state taxation. On a per capita basis, state revenue and expenditures are far higher in Hawaii, as well as Alaska, than in the 48 mainland states. The higher expenditure levels are necessary to assure an adequate level of public services which are more costly to provide in our states. Of the top 10 states with the highest poverty rates in the country, the Harvard-Moynihan study finds that only 3 others have an FMAP rate between 50 and 60 percent. The other six states have FMAP rates of 65 percent and higher. Even more revealing is that of the top 10 states with the lowest real per capita income, only Hawaii has a 50 percent FMAP rate.

During consideration of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, the Senate included a provision increasing Alaska's FMAP rate to 59.8 percent for the next 3 years. Setting a higher match rate as was done for Alaska would still leave Hawaii with a lower FMAP rate than a majority of the states, but would better recognize Hawaii's ability to pay its fair share of the costs of the Medicaid program.

I hope to make my colleagues in the House of Representative colleagues cognizant of the need for this legislation and to earn their support for its passage in the 105th Congress.

REGARDING THE ELECTIONS HELD IN GUYANA

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 28, 1998

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the people of the Republic of Guyana for holding multiparty elections on December 15, 1997. By most accounts, based on the observations of international organizations on the day of the elections, the process was free and fair.

I congratulate the Guyanese people for their strong belief in the democratic process as shown by an 88 percent voter turnout.

I regret that factions in the country called for civil disobedience and that there was mass looting and rioting for many days following the elections.

I encourage an audit of the elections by the Caribbean Community, (CARICOM) and call on all parties and opposition leaders to respect the outcome of the audit as the final decision and make a vow to peace and stability in Guyana.

I call on the newly elected President Janet Jagan, a native of Chicago, to respect the rule of law and human rights in this fledgling democracy.